



DISASTER NEWS



MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY--FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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DISASTER CRISIS COUNSELING AVAILABLE

TUPELO, MS – The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has approved an initial allocation of \$50,000 to pay for 60 days of free counseling services for those who suffered losses and had their lives disrupted by February's severe storms and tornadoes in Mississippi.

The four counties participating in the program are Holmes, Oktibbeha, Lowndes and Pontotoc. The Mississippi Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) initiated the program.

"People hit by a disaster often are dazed and distressed by the sudden adversity in their world," said Leon Shaifer, of MEMA, who heads the state's recovery efforts. "Counseling empowers them to regain control of their lives."

The state may request an extension of counseling to nine months if the need exists. Children and the elderly are special concerns following a major disaster. Counselors visit schools, neighborhood meetings, shopping centers, faith communities and recovery centers to listen and help those in need.

"FEMA recognizes that disasters cause emotional and psychological trauma as well as the physical devastation seen by the eye," said John Hannah of FEMA, the official in charge of federal recovery operations. We fund crisis counseling to help people recover in all aspects from the harmful effects of a disaster.

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<p>More information is available on FEMA's For the Media site, at www.fema.gov/media, and Fax-on-Demand at (202) 646-FEMA. For information on Project Impact: Building Disaster Resistant Communities, go to www.fema.gov/impact. Radio actualities are available from the FEMA Radio Network (1-800-323-5248).</p>
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